



Resources for Children's Good Health

Bright Futures: Family Matters

Formerly *PIcture This*

MENTALLY HEALTHY – This concept, while similar to being physically healthy, is less well understood and harder to measure. Families need to understand the challenges, the resources, and what they can contribute. Parents will also benefit from opportunities to discuss and share ideas.

Every child and adolescent deserves to experience joy, have high self-esteem, have friends, acquire a sense of efficacy, and believe she can succeed in life

Bright Futures Children's Health Charter

Children are born with and develop many qualities on their own; however, there is much that families can do to support healthy mental health. 1. Observe and learn the cues your child offers and then be responsive to and build on them. 2. Learn what to expect. 3. Develop strong partnerships with your child's primary health care provider and others involved in your children's lives – for information, guidance, and support.

Infancy (birth to 11 months)

An infant's mental health is affected by physical health, temperament, resilience and by the love and support parents and other caregivers provide. Families can learn to recognize their child's unique personality and style and respond in ways that support development. Infants will be establishing patterns of eating, sleeping, and ways to calm themselves when distressed. Families can help by gentle handling and loving support. Ask your child's primary care provider about more clues to your baby's emotional development.

Early Childhood (1 to 4 years)

Parents can seek ways to help their children develop regular sleep and eating patterns and use the toilet by themselves. Parents can also help children manage emotions – frustration, anger. Feeling valued, loved, and accepted are key to children's later success in school, and their overall behavior and happiness. Social experiences, first within the family and then with

friends, help children acquire skills over time. Parents can provide opportunities and support.

Middle Childhood (5 to 10 years)

During these ages children develop many abilities, skills, and strengths. Their ability to care for themselves increases and they learn about cooperation, fair play, and ideas about right and wrong. Challenges for children at these ages include: self esteem, learning to "bounce back" from disappointment, making friends, learning to take "reasonable" risks, learning strategies when they are not successful. Children also need to develop a healthy body image and learn about and carry out healthy behaviors.

Adolescence (11 to 21 years)

At these ages children move from childhood to adulthood, often in uneven spurts. Mental health challenges for adolescents include: self esteem and managing moods, changing body image and physical appearance, sexuality, identity and independence. Other tasks: changing relationships with family, friends, and peers; roles, rules, responsibilities, and work. Teens must also learn to manage effectively at school. Injury prevention, especially risks involving alcohol and drugs. Parents need to promote independence while still offering guidance and support – even if teens do not always think they need it! Other trusted adults, especially primary care providers, continue to have important roles to play.

Adapted from Bright Futures in Practice: Mental Health (2002)

Family Voices is a national grassroots network of families and friends speaking on behalf of children with special health needs. Our children are also part of the wider world of children. With a Partners in Information and Communication (PIC) Cooperative Agreement from the MCH Bureau - DHHS, Family Voices works to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. *Bright Futures: Family Matters* is a digest of articles and news clips to share with families, family organizations, and our professional partners to offer a flavor of activities in the maternal and child health community. We hope to encourage flourishing partnerships!

Check out our Family Voices web sites at:

www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org and www.familyvoices.org

Partners... Institute for Family Centered Care (IFCC)

a non-profit organization, provides essential leadership to advance the understanding and practice of family-centered care. The Institute serves as a resource to health care professionals, patients, and family members through development of print and audiovisual resources, information dissemination, policy and research initiatives, training and technical assistance. By developing effective, ongoing relationships with professionals and family members, Institute staff, faculty, board members, and consultants work to promote meaningful change at a systems level and enhance the quality of healthcare and human services. The Institute offers two intensive training seminars annually, attended by health care professionals, patients, and families from throughout the U.S. and Canada. For more information visit their web site at <http://www.familycenteredcare.org> or contact:
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Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: 301-652-0281 Fax: 301-652-0186
or email institute@ifcc.org



Family Resource Corner

- ❖ **Developmental- Behavioral Pediatrics**
Online Community offers articles, tip sheets, current news and useful links about children's emotional development and behavior. Short articles for parents help them teach social skills and manage their children's behavior. For more information go to: www.dbpeds.org
- ❖ **Nutrition Café** - an informational, interactive web site for kids! There are several games and a wealth of information and nutrition facts throughout the site. For more information go to: <http://www.exhibits.pacsci.org/nutrition/>
- ❖ **NIDA for Teens** - an interactive website about how drugs affect the brain and the body. This site is geared to adolescents ages 11-15. The site includes facts, real life stories, games and a question and answer section. For more information go to: www.teens.drugabuse.gov

What's new in research?



Child Trends published a research brief based on reviews of 300 research studies on adolescent emotional well-being and mental health. The research brief concluded that programs that use integrated approaches to improve emotional well being prove to be the most effective. They also found that early prevention programs may help prevent emotional problems. Their review also found that "emotionally positive and warm" home and school environments help adolescents and improve their emotional wellbeing. See the sections on "what works" and "best bets." To read the 8-page brief go to:

www.childtrends.org/pdf/k5brief.pdf



Tidbits for the Month March is National Nutrition Month!

The American Dietetic Association sponsors National Nutrition Month to inform the public about how to make healthy decisions about eating habits and exercise. You can find helpful tips about how to eat healthy when you're on the go and much more! For more information go to:

http://www.eatright.org/Public/NutritionInformation/92_11422.cfm



**Highlights for the next
Bright Futures: Family Matters**

Share your news with others!

We're always looking for news and activities about family organization and programs to post. Share exciting events and activities about your organization that will be interesting to others. Email Lindsey Pope at lpope@fcsn.org or fax at (617) 572-2094 with your tidbits. To subscribe to the newsletter, email or call Lindsey at (617) 236-7210 •

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